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P-14

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## Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Committee business

## Comité permanent des comptes publics

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2<sup>nd</sup> Session  
41<sup>st</sup> Parliament

Wednesday 4 October 2017

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Mercredi 4 octobre 2017

Chair: Ernie Hardeman  
Clerk: Katch Koch

Président : Ernie Hardeman  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
PUBLIC ACCOUNTSCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
COMPTES PUBLICS

Wednesday 4 October 2017

Mercredi 4 octobre 2017

*The committee met at 0902 in room 151.*

## COMMITTEE BUSINESS

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Good morning. We're here for the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for Wednesday, October 4. The first item on the agenda this morning is the notice of motion filed by Lisa MacLeod, that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts invite the Ontario College of Trades to reappear before the committee for the review on Employment Ontario, section 3.04 of the 2016 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario. With that, we'll ask Ms. MacLeod to move that motion.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I move that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts invite the Ontario College of Trades to reappear before the committee for the review on Employment Ontario, section 3.04 of the 2016 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** You've heard the motion. Debate? Ms. MacLeod.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Simply put, we enjoyed the exchange with the ministry. We didn't feel we had enough time, and it's a fairly important report, so my colleague and I thought it would be beneficial for the committee to bring back the new College of Trades. I know they've taken a different direction and there are certainly a number of new people who are part of that, and they've made a number of improvements, so we felt it would be beneficial for them to come in and visit the committee one more time as we engage in report writing.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Further debate? Mr. Hillier.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I think, especially reading through this report—and members on the other side will remember we had this discussion, I believe the same day as we had Employment Ontario here and the College of Trades, that the members opposite were not inclined to bring back the College of Trades at that time. But it's important, especially when we look through the draft report that we have in front of us as well, and recalling back those discussions we had about Employment Ontario—I think we will all agree that employment is a critical piece of public policy. In our discussions, we saw that—how should I say this?—the performance of public policy in getting people back to work left much to be

desired. The statistics were pretty evident that our employment programs are not very effective.

During that whole discussion, we were focused on those employment programs, but we never had the opportunity to speak at any length with the College of Trades. If employment and seeing people working in this province is an important priority for this government, the government should recognize that there's a need to have the College of Trades in here as well.

If employment opportunities and people finding good, gainful employment is not a priority, then that's fine; don't bother reviewing the performance of the College of Trades; just put your hands up and say, "Whatever will be done will be done; que sera, sera." But I don't think that's the function of this committee. I think there's a lot of people in this Legislature and a lot of people in this province who are expecting members of this Legislature and of this committee to do our job and review public policies and how they're performing and ensuring that there is oversight. If there are ways and means that things can be done better, that is a responsibility that we should not take lightly and just say, "Que sera, sera"; we should actually do that function, do it well, do it diligently, and we can't do that if we're not permitted and allocated some reasonable length of time to have that discussion with the people who are implementing public policy.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Further debate?

**Mr. Han Dong:** I think a similar motion came forward early in May. Just going back to Hansard and looking at it, I think the opposition members—we all had almost 40 minutes to ask questions. I asked some questions. I think it was MPP Sattler who asked some questions to the College of Trades. The Conservative caucus had the same amount of time. I'm not sure if they asked any questions to the College of Trades. I feel that there was enough time given.

I said this before: It's time to move on with the report writing. This is a very busy committee. We have quite a few things on the way. Again, each party has the free will of making one pick to ask the Auditor General to look at. So I think it's time to get on with the report writing.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Further debate?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'll just reiterate that in the evidence presented, the discussions that were had, we saw that our employment programs are not performing very well. Members opposite may think 40 minutes is plenty of time to allocate and to scrutinize public policy that



affects tens and tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of employees, of workers in this province. I don't think 40 minutes was adequate. We didn't get to question the College of Trades at all. We didn't have an opportunity to get into any discussion on apprenticeship levels or what could or ought to be done better to improve apprenticeship completions.

The College of Trades is a brand new institution in this province. Their first time to come before committee to have a discussion about how the implementation of that policy is proceeding provided no time for questions from the opposition. I think it demonstrates a dismissiveness by the government. Employment opportunities and workers are just not that important to them if they will not permit an opportunity to have a discussion with the College of Trades and see how they can respond to this committee, to some of the Auditor General's recommendations, and for the committee to be able to do our job in providing thoughtful advice and recommendations once we have further insight into the implementation of public policy with respect to apprenticeships.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Okay. Further debate?

**Mr. John Fraser:** Call the question, please.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Is there any further debate?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Recorded vote.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** If there is no further debate, I'll put the question.

### Ayes

Hillier, MacLeod, Sattler.

### Nays

Crack, Delaney, Dong, Fraser.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** The motion is lost.

**Mr. John Fraser:** Chair?

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Yes.

**Mr. John Fraser:** We're moving to report writing now. As has been the process in this committee, if we have outstanding questions—if there are things that we want to know from the ministry or anybody else who has appeared before this committee—we can ask those questions and get them answered as we have in the past. I would like to suggest that if there are some questions that are specific today that the members across have, we discuss and debate those things and handle them that way.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** That is a very effective process when you've already asked some questions and you've got some fleshing-out of the written text. It is less than adequate when you've not been permitted the opportunity to start and have the initial discussion.

**The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Okay. Thank you very much. As was said, we will now go into report writing and, with that, we will close the door and put the sign on the doorknob. If we'd just wait a few minutes before we go into closed session.

*The committee continued in closed session at 0913.*



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Ms. Peggy Sattler (London West ND)

### **Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes**

Ms. Bonnie Lysyk, Auditor General

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